DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 298 178 TM 012 340

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TITLE Formative and Summative Approaches to Effectiveness Indicators.
PUB DATE Apr 87
NOTE 29p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Washington, DC, April 20-24, 1987). Portions of appendices contain small print.
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Achievement Tests; Educational Improvement; Elementary Secondary Education; Evaluation Methods; *Formative Evaluation; *Report Cards; School Districts; *School Effectiveness; State Programs; *Summative Evaluation; Teacher Attitudes
IDENTIFIERS *Tennessee Commissioners Report Card; *Tennessee School Improvement Project

ABSTRACT

The development of the Tennessee school system Commissioner's Report Card (CRC) and the School Report Card--later named the Tennessee School Improvement Project (TSIP)--is described. The report card project began in 1984 when statewide mandated achievement testing was introduced. The first CRC included limited results of such testing. The first set of report cards for each school system was presented to the State Board of Education in October 1985. Data on the CRC for each school system generally concern student scores on basic skills tests; Stanine scores on the Stanford Achievement Test; percentage of students passing state proficiency tests and/or taking advanced placement courses; percentage of diplomas granted; and other identifying school characteristics. As eventually developed, the CRC is fairly summative in nature, but the TSIP is much more formative in concept and implementation. Both approaches used together are more effective than either alone. Appendices present the original list of indicators, the 1984-85 Alamo City Schools Report Card, 1985-86 Alcoa City Schools Report Card, and the TSIP instruments. (SLD)

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Formative and Summative Approaches to Effectiveness Indicators

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American Educational Research Association
Annual Meeting
Washington, D.C.
April, 1987

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Formative and Summative Approaches to Effectiveness Indicators

As part of its continuing effort to make the community aware of the achievements and progress of Tennessee's school systems, the Department of Education began issuing an annual Report Card for each system in 1985. The first Commissioner's Report Card was issued in Fall, 1985 and included information for the 1984-85 school year.

As the Commissioner's Report Card was developed, it was the Department's intention to begin with a report focused at the school system level (Tennessee has 141 school systems) and follow with reports for each of the more than 1,700 individual schools in the state. Accordingly, a pilot project to develop the school level report card was conducted during 1985-86.

Because of this timing, the development of the system level Report Card and the development of the school level effort were parallel efforts during 1985-86. This paper traces the development of both the system Report Card and the school report card (later renamed the Tennessee School Improvement Project, TSIP).

The Commissioner's Report Card

In Fall, 1984, the Tennessee Department of Education began the development of a report card project, designed to inform the people of Tennessee on the status and progress of their schools, to assist them in identifying the areas in which they were dissatisfied, and to motivate them to work on improving those areas.

The report card effort was a small part of a much larger effort to focus public attention on improving education in Tennessee. During that year, the legislature passed an omnibus education reform act, the Comprehensive Education Reform Act of 1984 (CERA), which added and funded numerous improvements for public education in the state. Communities were urged to form citizens' task forces to assist the schools (most did), and the climate was one of optimism and energy as dozens of new programs were put into place and new resources were tapped to guide and support them.

A major new program for Tennessee was state-wide mandated achievement testing. In Spring, 1984, the state administered two new testing programs for the first time: the Stanford Achievement Test, 7th edition, for grades 2, 5, and 7; and a criterion-referenced test of basic skills in reading and mathematics for grades 3, 6, and 8.

Although the results of these testing programs, and the continuing high school proficiency testing program, had already been presented to the State Board of Education and therefore were public knowledge, it was felt that most citizens were not aware of them. It was also felt that presenting test scores alone, without other information to help the reader understand the characteristics of the school and school system, would be inappropriate.

Accordingly, the first list of possible indicators for inclusion in the Report Card was both broad and varied (see Table 1). It was recognized that many of these indicators were not currently available and that some would be exceedingly difficult and expensive to collect, but the strategy was to begin with the desired set and then compromise as required to attain a feasible set for the first year effort. It was hoped that in succeeding years it would become possible not only to make additional indicators available, but also to refine and improve the list of those desired.

Reality set in shortly. Timelines were short, data resources limited, and printing a nightmare. The first Commissioner's Report Card was able to include only a very limited set of information: Basic Skills First achievement test scores (average percent of objectives mastered grades 3, 6 and 8); Stanford Achievement Test achievement test scores (stanine grades 2, 5 and 7); percent of students passing the high school Proficiency Test (grade 9); percent of students taking advanced placement courses; percent of diplomas granted by category (honors, regular, certificate of attendance, special education); percent of teachers certified in all areas in which they teach; percent of professionals on the Career Ladder; percent attendance reduction from grade 9 to grade 12 (a drop-out related index); percent of students suspended or expelled; percent of schools accredited by Southern Association; pupil-teacher ratio; number of schools; and per-pupil expenditure (see Attachment 1).

Although it proved necessary to limit the selection of data primarily to that which was already available, it was possible to include student outcome data (e.g., test scores, diplomas granted), student process data (e.g., advanced placement course taking, attendance rate, suspensions and

expulsions), teacher input data (e.g. teachers certified in all areas, Career Ladder participation, pupil-teacher ratio), and community input data (e.g. per-pupil expenditure). State averages were provided only for the test data due to lack of time to calculate them.

A separate Report Card was prepared for each school system. The superintendents were provided two types of input. First, each was given an advance copy of all of the data relating to that school system and asked to either "sign-off" on it or to correct it. Superintendents choosing to correct the data, had to sign that they could verify the corrected information with data in their possession. Corrections on test scores were verified with the State Testing and Evaluation Center, and were not used unless the testing center agreed.

Second, a space was reserved on the Report Card for a section to be written and submitted by the school system. Superintendents were asked to submit the sections in final form. Although it proved necessary to do extensive editing for length and mechanics, the substance submitted by the superintendent was not changed.

An additional feature was the space left on the Report Card for data for the next two years. Although this spacing was not necessary (it was anticipated that the format would require revision before the following year), it signaled clearly that although progress data was not being shown currently, it was to be included in future years.

The full set of 141 Commissioners' Report Cards was presented to the State Board of Education for the first time in October, 1985. Publicity packets were prepared for media across the state and a press conference held. Additional copies of the cards were sent to Superintendents for distribution to their own school systems.

In general, the response to the Report Cards from the media and from the public was positive. There were, however, some trouble spots. Although the cards were designed for one-system-at-a-time evaluation, the press took cards from neighboring systems and compared the results, to the dismay of some superintendents. There was some confusion about the difference between pupil-teacher ratio and average class-size, with teachers concerned that the figures reported were too low. There was concern about different kinds of information being lumped together, as in suspension and expulsion data. There was also a desire expressed to have state averages in all areas.

Response from the local school systems was less enthusiastic. There was a general dismay at the concept of public reporting of test score information as well as other information which had previously been kept under wraps. Superintendents exhibited a general, non-specific paranoia at the notion that their school system might be unfairly judged on the basis of the Report Card's content. The State Department provided copies of the Report Card for each superintendent, but did not specify how they were to be distributed. While some school superintendents distributed all they had and duplicated sufficient copies for each student to carry a report card home, others did not distribute their copies and publicly questioned the veracity and denounced the use of the Report Cards.

During 1985-86, the Commissioner's Report Card was revised. Twelve major changes were made: (1) state averages were included for all reporting areas, (2) indicators of high-cost students were added (percent of students on free or reduced lunch, percent of special education students, percent of Chapter 1 students, percent of students with English as a second language), (3) average professional salary was added, (4) percent of seniors not receiving a diploma during spring graduation was added, (5) the interpretive information on stanine scores was improved, (6) the percent of eligible students in Vocational Education courses was included, (7) the percents of elementary and secondary schools accredited by the Southern Association were separated, (8) the percent of students suspended was separated from the percent of those expelled, (9) the percent of oversized classes was added, (10) the Stanford Test of Academic Skills scores for grades 9 and 12 was added (the test having been implemented in 1985-96), and (11) the average daily membership as an indicator of student enrollment was added and (12) two years of data were presented whenever possible (see Attachment 2).

Again, superintendents were given the opportunity to review the data and also to provide a section of their own to be printed on the card. The Department provided samples of exemplary sections from the previous year as a guide. The quality of the sections submitted improved substantially, and little editing was done.

Because statewide averages were included, the appropriate divisions within the Department were asked to determine how best to calculate data relating to their own divisions, and to review the statewide averages calculated for accuracy. Problems were identified with both the Career Ladder and the Vocational Education data and these were corrected prior to issuing the Report Cards.

Again, individual report cards were prepared for each school system and distributed to the State Board of Education, the superintendents, and the media. At the request of the State Board of Education, additional copies were distributed to the community education task forces and the individual system school boards. There was far less fuss than in the previous year, although concerns were raised again about the unfairness of comparing one school system to another. The appropriateness of the vocational education data was again questioned. There were also some concerns raised that some school systems might be "teaching to the test" (or worse) in order to have high scores or gains to report.

Has the Commissioner's Report Card had an impact? Clearly it has. Southern Association has never seen such a level of interest in attaining accreditation. Businesses considering relocating to Tennessee call for copies, as do real estate agents. Debates continue over whether it is more accurate or appropriate to characterize participation in, for example, Vocational Education, in terms of the percent of students participating or the percent of class hours devoted to participation.

The state-sponsored Teachers' Study Council, an organization composed of most of Tennessee's classroom teachers, has taken an intense interest in the reporting of the pupil-teacher ratio for each system. This group reports that school boards are using the information contained in the report cards to determine needs for improvement within the school system, and that the method of reporting pupil-teacher ratio is too often misinterpreted as an average class size.

Media representatives have gone to some lengths to obtain copies of multiple report cards for comparison purposes. One west Tennessee newspaper displayed a cut-and-paste version across its front page comparing all school systems in its reading area. The press coverage has ranged from front page news articles to editorials.

Superintendents and system Boards of Education review their results and, yes, compare them with those of neighboring systems. System level staff confirm, deny, explain, refute, or express confusion about the results, but they talk about them. Report Cards start discussions, debates, and, often, efforts to improve. That is their purpose. By being difficult to ignore, they focus public attention on the status and progress of public education.

The Tennessee School Improvement Project (TSIP)

The Tennessee School Improvement Project (TSIP) was begun in recognition of the facts that (1) most of the data needed for the system level report card would have to be collected first at the school level and then aggregated, and (2) school effectiveness is ultimately created, and therefore most appropriately assessed, at the building level. In order to identify criteria and procedures for a building level report card, the Department established a pilot project in 1985-86. Schools were invited to volunteer for this project and 146 of them did. Nineteen were selected, representing a range of school size, grade level configuration, and other characteristics.

Representatives from the pilot schools met with Department staff and outside consultants to review the effective schools research and to identify possible indicators for the building level report card. The pilot groups decided to group criteria for the building level report card around six correlates of effective schools: a strong instructional focus, a safe and positive school climate, frequent monitoring of student progress, a strong instructional leader, high expectations for student achievement, and strong parent and community involvement.

At first, it was anticipated that separate indicators would be needed for elementary and secondary grade levels. This was primarily because of differences in the information available at the elementary and secondary levels. For example, diploma information, participation in extracurricular activities, awards and honors, and proficiency test scores were expected to be available and relevant at the secondary level, but not at the elementary level.

The representative for each participating school took the possible options for indicators back to the school for review by the staff. Indicators were evaluated for importance to identifying effectiveness, feasibility for collection, and the likelihood that they could be reported fairly across schools. In subsequent meetings, the indicators were revised, consolidated, and judged appropriate for all schools without separation by grade levels. Because of the variety of the grade level configurations used by schools in Tennessee, it was determined appropriate to include space for all information and leave blank whatever was considered inappropriate for the particular building.

The pilot schools also recognized the importance of including both factual and opinion-based information in the evaluation of school effectiveness. After several tries, they designed a two-part instrumentation system. Each part was called a School Checkup. The first part, Part A,

provided space for test scores and a variety of other "facts" about the school. In addition to the kinds of information included on the system-level Report Card, Part A included information on resource students; transfers in and out during the school year; the availability and use of curriculum frameworks and learning materials for every class; teacher planning periods; teacher attendance; and school discipline policy. There is also space for individual schools to add indicators relevant to their own situations.

It is interesting to note, however, that the pilot schools strongly resisted a recommendation to ask schools to disaggregate their test scores to determine possible problems in educational equity. The general feeling was that equity was a fine concept, but none of the pilot schools wanted to be held accountable for it. They felt the equity issue was too politically sensitive to include as a mandate with a building level report card, but they had no problem with schools voluntarily disaggregating their data.

Part B is a survey designed to collect opinions from teachers, other staff, students, parents, citizens, and other constituencies of the school. There are several forms of Part B, designed for different audiences but containing the same items. Part B consists of a series of statements to which each respondent is to indicate "A" if the statement is true nearly all of the time at this school, "S" if the statement is partially true or true some of the time at this school, "N" if the statement has little or no truth at the school, or "X" if the respondent doesn't know whether or not this is a true statement about the school.

The statements are grouped in categories according to the correlates of effective schools: instructional focus, instructional leadership, school climate, high expectations, home-school relationships, and student performance. The Assessment Instruments, parts A and B, are included in Attachment C. No norms or standards of acceptability have been established for any of the items on these instruments.

The pilot schools completed, analyzed and evaluated the information on the instruments themselves as a basis for self-improvement. Although they had agreed from the beginning to make their own information public, they recommended that the instruments not be mandated for public use. Instead, they suggested that the program be an optional one for self-improvement with the results to be disseminated by the specific school in whatever way the school wished (including not at all).

Their reasoning was that the value of the school level effort was in self-determination of the information needed, its acceptability, and the nature of the improvement needed. The appropriate information, especially that from Part B, would be almost impossible to collect accurately without cooperation and support at the school level. In addition, it could not be appropriately interpreted without reference to context considerations available only within the school. After lengthy deliberations they recommended that the school level report card be renamed the Tennessee School Improvement Program (TSIP), and be made available, on an optional basis, to all Tennessee schools.

The Department accepted these recommendations, and is making the model available to Tennessee schools on request. Departmental staff are available to help schools willing to commit to self-improvement evaluate the appropriateness of the instrumentation and, if necessary, modify it to meet their needs; collect the required information; analyze and evaluate the results; plan and implement improvement activities; and evaluate the results of their efforts. The data collected is considered to belong to the individual school and is not released by the state.

To date the TSIP concepts have been presented to several professional groups within the state. Response has been extremely positive at the concept level, but limited at the practitioner level. Currently three schools are working with the Department staff to implement the improvement process, and at least two school systems are operating the project independently. Accurate information about the total number of participants is difficult to obtain because some schools and systems are operating the process on their own.

The process has also been refined through some microcomputer applications. The results of the opinionnaire Checkup, Part B, can be marked on scan cards and a program will read the cards, weight the responses, and provide a school with its results. In addition, the State Testing and Evaluation Center can provide an ACSII file of student test score data to local systems which can be transferred to an IBM or an Apple microcomputer. Simple adjustments to the file enable a school or a system to disaggregate test scores in several areas.

Formative and Summative Approaches

The Commissioner's Report Card is fairly summative in nature. It is prepared and distributed by the Department of Education staff, with limited contributions by the individ-

ual school systems. Its primary focus is on providing a picture of the status of the school system.

The Report Card is utilized in the School Approval process conducted annually by the state in which a determination is made whether or not to approve a particular school system for the following year. Although it is not the only information used, it has helped move the School Approval process from a focus almost exclusively on facilities to a more balanced consideration of the educational circumstances provided to students.

There is no specific plan or design which encourages the school systems or others to identify and remediate deficiencies which may appear in the Report Card except for those which may be cited for improvement in the School Approval process. Even there, the Report Card provides only the identification of the problem; it is not designed as a diagnostic tool for suggesting solutions.

The Tennessee School Improvement Project is much more formative in concept and implementation. It begins with the documentation and delineation of a felt need by the individual school staff and focuses on self-directed self-improvement. In the process, the school staff learn and apply evaluation skills which they may continue to use in the future.

The TSIP instrumentation is designed not only to identify general areas of need, but to suggest more specific targets for improvement. Where the Report Card is eclectic and pragmatic, TSIP is organized around the effective schools research. Where the Report Card is designed to create discussion, the TSIP is designed to create improvement. At least in theory.

However, TSIP can be effective only where motivation exists. Without a will, a commitment to improve, TSIP will be used ineffectively, if at all. Report Card helps to create a context in which the motivation to improve may be fostered. Without the public discussions engendered by the availability of relevant information, the degree to which self-improvement is undertaken by schools may be heavily dependent on the caliber and the dedication of their leaders. In this situation, the improvement may be least likely to occur where it is most needed.

Together, summative and formative indicators approaches can raise an awareness of the need to improve, provide the necessary guidance for the improvement effort, and help evaluate the effectiveness of that effort. Except in unusual circumstances, it is likely that both types of indicators, used together, will be more effective than either alone.

Table 1: Original list of indicators

Attachment 1: 1984-85 Report Card
Attachment 2: 1985-86 Report Card
Attachment 3: TSIP Instruments (Parts A & B)

LIST OF POTENTIAL INDICATORS UNDER CONSIDERATION AS OF 11/9/84

OUTCOMES

STUDENT PERFORMANCE

NAEP: Achievement of 9, 13, and 17 Yr. Olds
- Reading, Math, Science (national trends)
- Reading by race ethnicity (national trend)

Public/Private Student Achievement

SAT and ACT Scores
- national trend
- State trend

International Comparisons
- Reading and Math 1st and 5th Grades
- Math Achievement 8th and 12th Grades

[Synthesis of State Asessments]

Carnegie Units Earned by Students (by subject)

Grades Earned by Students (by subject)

TRANSITIONS

High School Graduation Rate (national trend)

Secondary Education Attainment (by State)

Plans of Seniors for First Year after High School

[Adult Literacy]

[Remedial Education at Postsecondary level]

Percent of 18-24 Year Olds Voting

RESOURCES

FISCAL RESOURCES

Current Expenditure per Pupil
- national trend
- by State

Public School Fiscal Effort

Current Expenditures in Comparison with Other Nations

HUMAN RESOURCES

Staffing Levels
- Pupil/Teacher Ratio (national trend)
- Pupil/ Staff Ratio (national trend)
- Class Size by elementary/secondary (national trend)

Quality of the Teaching Force
- Verbal Ability/SAT Scores
- Verbal Ability/GRE Scores

Profile of the Teaching Force

Teacher Supply/Demand and Shortage by Field (national trend)

Average Teacher Salary (national trend)

Teacher Earnings Comparisons
- Teachers and Other Occupations by Male/ Female (national trend)

PHYSICAL/MATERIAL RESOURCES

Public School Library Stock Books per Pupil

Microcomputers in Public Schools (national trend)

CONTEXT OF EDUCATION

PERCEPTIONS OF THE SCHOOLS

Public Opinion Ratings of Schools

Comparison, Public/Teacher Opinion of Problems

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

[Leadership/Expectations/Climate]

Teacher Job Satisfaction

Student Attendance

Crime/Violence
(student views)
(teacher views)

STUDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Use of Time Outside the School

Homework and Pupil Cumulative Grade Average

Enrollment by Type of Curriculum (national trend)

Student Mobility

Student Population Characteristics

Student Enrollment by Age (national trend)

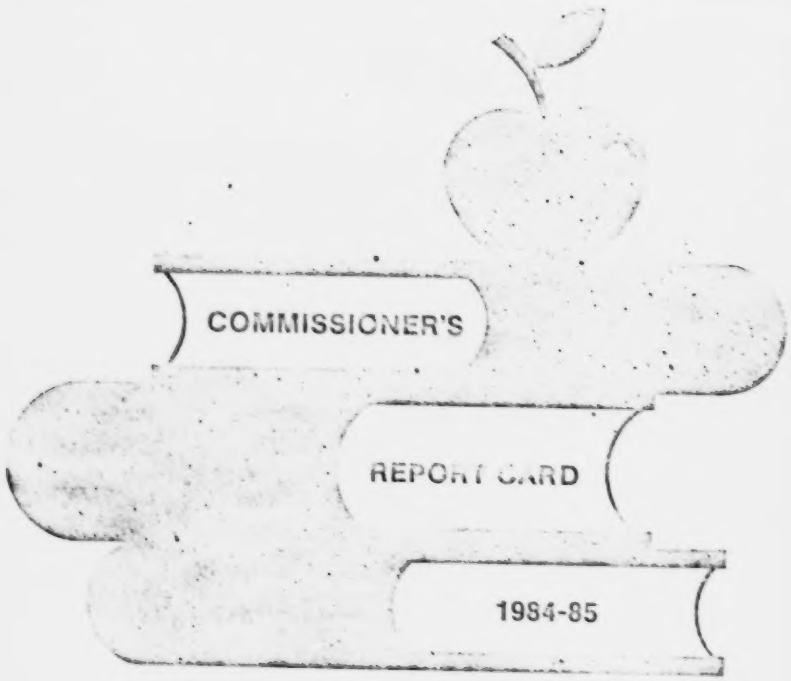
STATE GOVERNANCE

State Required Carnegie Units
- National Trend
- by Subject Area

State Assessment Programs
- High School Graduation (national trend)
- Testing in Grades 1-6 and for High School Graduation (by State)

Teachers
- Certification Requirements
- Competency Testing

A Report About
Your School System



Alamo City Schools

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TENNESSEE
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER
NASHVILLE 37219

Dear Parents,

The development and implementation of the Better Schools Program is an exciting process for all of us in Tennessee. School systems have been involved with teaching and testing students, with computer instruction and basic skills, and with a Career Ladder Program in an attempt to maintain and develop the highest quality in Tennessee's schools.

This Report Card is a reflection of some of the measures of an effective school system. It also serves as a "map" of where we are and where we need to go. We can all be encouraged that in Tennessee we have the Better Schools Program to help each child reach his or her maximum potential.

I encourage you to visit your child's school to talk with the principal and the teachers and to become acquainted with the program. It is through your involvement that you will be able to develop a truly complete picture of the quality of your child's education.

Sincerely,

Robert L. McIlrath

Robert L. McIlrath, Commissioner
Tennessee Department of Education

State of Tennessee
Board of Education
Cordell Hull Building
Nashville, Tennessee 37219

Dear Parents:

The State Board of Education is dedicated to strengthening our public schools. Indeed, our goal is that Tennessee's schools become among the best in the nation. I think we are making progress. This Report Card will help all of us understand just how well we are doing.

Schools reflect the communities which they serve. There are many things about your school for which you can be justifiably proud. Visit your school, express your appreciation to those working at make your school a success, and help them make improvements that are needed. Remember, it is your school, and you have a real opportunity to work with those at the school to make it even better.

Sincerely,

Nelson Andrews

Nelson Andrews
Chairman, State Board of Education

Alamo City Schools

Subjects		Grade level	1984-85	1985-86	1986-87	State Average
Basic Skills First Test (percent score)	Reading	3	75			78
		6	50			65
		8				71
	Math	3	77			76
		6	54			62
		8				69
Stanford Achievement Test (Stanine score)	Reading	2	5			5
		5	3			5
		7				5
	Math	2	7			6
		5	5			5
		7				5
	Spelling	2	6			7
	Language	5	5			5
		7				6
	Environment	2	4			5
	Science	5	3			5
		7				6
	Social Science	5	3			4
		7				5
% Students Passing State Proficiency Test	Language	9				79
	Math	9				89
	Both	9				76
% Student in Advanced Placement Courses		12				N/A
% Diplomas granted	Honors	12				N/A
	Regular	12				N/A
	Certificates of Attendance	12				N/A
	Special education	12				N/A
% Teachers certified in all areas in which they teach		ALL	100			N/A
% Professionals on Career Ladder		ALL	81			N/A
% Attendance Reduction		9-12				N/A
% Attendance Rate		ALL	96.5			N/A
% Students suspended or expelled		ALL				N/A
% Schools Accredited by Southern Association		ALL				N/A
Pupil Teacher Ratio		ALL	21.2			N/A

TESTING INFORMATION Students in Tennessee are given three different kinds of tests.

Students in Grades 3, 6, and 8 are given the **Basic Skills First** test. These tests were developed especially for students in Tennessee to measure how well a student has mastered reading and mathematics skills taught at those grades. There are no passing or failing grades. The scores show the percent of skills which have been mastered by a student. This Report Card score shows the average of the percent of skills mastered by students in your school system.

Students in grades 2, 5, and 7 are given the **Stanford Achievement Test**. This test is designed to tell schools and parents how groups of children perform when compared nationally to other groups of children. These scores are reported as stanine scores. Stanines are scores which range from one to nine, with one being low and nine being high. An average score would be between four and six. The Report Card shows a stanine score for the students in your school system on each of the parts of the test.

The **Tennessee Proficiency Test** was designed to measure the minimum skills in mathematics and language arts that students should possess upon graduation from high school. Students must achieve a passing score of 70 percent correct on both the math and language arts tests in order to fulfill one of the requirements for receiving a regular diploma. Students take the test for the first time as ninth graders and are given up to five opportunities to pass all parts.

DIPLOMA INFORMATION Tennessee students may receive four kinds of diplomas:

Honors Diploma is an optional diploma offered to students who meet the increased requirements as established by the State Board of Education. The requirements include accelerated English, math, science and social studies, a 3.0 grade point average, and other requirements.

High School Diploma is awarded to students who (a) earn 18 units of credit, (b) make passing scores on all components of the Proficiency Test, and (c) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

Certificate of Attendance is awarded to students who have earned 18 units of credit and who have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, but who fail to meet proficiency test standards.

Special Education Diploma is awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed an Individualized Education Program and who have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, but who have not passed all components of the Proficiency Test.

Some school systems offer their own diplomas which may exceed these standards.

OTHER INFORMATION **Advanced Placement Courses:** High school students may take advanced placement courses in certain subjects. If they complete the course and pass an examination they receive college credit. Tennessee schools are not required to offer advanced placement courses and may offer other courses with enriched content. This figure shows the percent of hours students spend in advanced placement courses.

Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Accreditation: Schools may select to seek accreditation from this regional accrediting agency in addition to receiving state approval. This agency recognizes quality schools, maintains a list of accredited schools, and requires a continuing school improvement program.

Pupil Teacher Ratio: This figure will show the average number of students per professional staff member in your school system. Administrators, such as the principal or assistant principal, are not included in this count.

Professionals on Career Ladder: This figure shows the percent of professional staff in your school system who are participating in the **Career Ladder Program**.

Attendance Rate: This figure shows the percent of average daily attendance rate of students in your school system for the preceeding year.

Attendance Reduction: The dropout rate shows the percent decrease in the number of students from the ninth grade to the twelfth grade. These students may have dropped out of school, transferred, failed a year, graduated early, or left school for other reasons not listed. This figure is a four year average.

Students Suspended or Expelled: This figure shows the percent of students who were suspended or expelled from school during the school year. Students who were suspended more than once are counted as two students.

Information About

Alamo City Schools

Number of Schools: 1
Expenditures Per Pupil: $1347.00

In 1984 Alamo City School became a pilot program for Computer Skills Next at the elementary level. During the past school year, all sixth grade students received instruction and hands-on experience in the fully equipped computer lab. By the end of the school term, students had progressed to the point that they were writing programs of their own. At the beginning of the 1985-86 school year, all fifth grade students were added to the computer instruction program. Future plans call for instruction of students in the lower elementary grades.

Music in the primary grades has received special emphasis at Alamo City through the employment of a specialized instructor of music. By utilizing the elements and activities contained in the state's K-3 art/music program, this music program is fast becoming one of the highest quality.

In an effort to recognize individual academic achievement, an honors club for students in the fifth and sixth grades was established at the beginning of the current year. The purpose of this club is to encourage students to strive for new levels of academic excellence by recognizing their success and dedication to learning.

(This information was written by the local school system.)

News about the Better Schools Program

MORE MATH AND SCIENCE

Emphasis on math and science in secondary schools began with curriculum development to improve these programs and assure that they meet mandated terminal objectives. Teachers gained reinforcement and renewed their competence during workshops held across the state. High school students, beginning with the class of '87, must include two credits each of math and science in their studies in order to graduate.

COMPUTER SKILLS NEXT

As mandated by the State Board of Education, every 7th and 8th grader in Tennessee public schools has completed a 15-lesson computer literacy course designed to familiarize them with the computer, its operation and its components. More than 2,000 teachers have been trained to teach the programs, which are being expanded to include 5th and 6th graders. Schools now have computers—one for every 30 students in the 7th or 8th grade—as well as machines for instructors' uses.

ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS

Fifty-one alternative centers, serving 90 school systems, provided expelled students with a choice. Eighty-seven percent of those students continued their studies in this supervised, structured environment, and 68.8% of those successfully returned to the regular classroom. School climate studies and in-school suspension programs are working to create the most productive possible environment for learning.

MORE MUSIC AND ART

The most aesthetic aspect of the Better Schools Program took effect in grades K-3 with the completion of the music and art curricula which will be extended into the upper grade levels. Through workshops, approximately 360 classroom teachers have learned new ways to artistically enhance their students' learning. A training session in east Tennessee joined music and art specialists with some of the area's finest professional artists for a day of intense study which will also be held in other areas of the state.

BASIC SKILLS FIRST

Teachers in grades K-8 are building foundations of fundamentals in their classrooms as they emphasize Basic Skills First. The '85-'86 school year marks the first time that every classroom in the state will be following both the reading and the mathematics basic skills curricula. Consulting teachers are contributing to the program's success by answering questions and recommending strategies during visits with teachers in the schools.

KINDERGARTEN FOR EVERY CHILD

Every child in Tennessee now has the chance to receive all the benefits of the kindergarten experience. Teachers are making their instruction of basic and developmental skills balanced as they expose each child to the world of classroom learning. A new mandatory screening program in all schools allows teachers to pinpoint and meet individual students' areas of need early in the kindergarten year.

GIFTED STUDENT PROGRAM

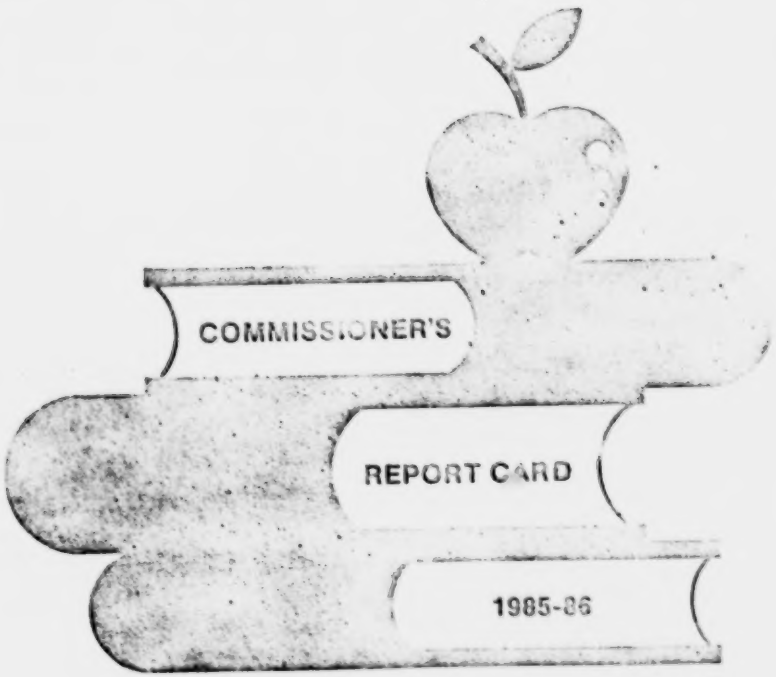
Summer school was something to look forward to this year for the 300 high school students who were chosen from a group of 1,500 applicants to attend the Governor's Schools of Tennessee. The students spent four weeks on university campuses across the state receiving enrichment in the areas of the Arts, the Humanities, and the Sciences. The three schools were such a success that the program is being improved and expanded to allow more gifted and talented students to participate next summer.

CAREER LADDER

Ninety-two percent of Tennessee's eligible teachers have begun climbing the Career Ladder—the innovative and progressive program which leads the nation in performance-based pay for educators. Constant monitoring of teachers' concerns, opinions, and suggestions has resulted in improvements and clarifications throughout the evaluation process, particularly in the new orientation manual. Tennessee continues to reward outstanding teachers for dedication and excellence as they strive to give students the highest quality education.

THE BETTER SCHOOLS PROGRAM *It Works!*

A Report About
Your School System



Alcoa City Schools

Alcoa City Schools

Testing Information		Grade Level	1984-85	1985-86	State Average
Basic Skills First Achievement Test (percent score)	Reading	3	85	87	78
		6	77	69	66
		8	84	83	75
	Math	3	87	90	80
		6	79	68	64
		8	89	88	69
Stanford Achievement Test (Stanine score) 7-9 = High 4-6 = Average 1-3 = Low	Reading	2	6	7	6
		5	4	6	5
		7	6	6	5
	Math	2	7	7	7
		5	6	8	6
		7	7	8	6
	Spelling	2	7	8	7
	Language	5	5	6	6
		7	7	8	6
	Environment	2	6	7	6
	Science	5	6	7	6
		7	7	7	5
	Social Science	5	4	6	5
		7	7	7	6
Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK 2) (Stanine score) 7-9 = High 4-6 = Average 1-3 = Low	Reading	9	*	6	5
		12	*	7	5
	Math	9	*	8	5
		12	*	8	5
	English	9	*	7	6
		12	*	7	6
	Science	9	*	6	5
		12	*	6	4
	Social Science	9	*	6	5
		12	*	6	4
Tennessee Proficiency Test (% Students Passing)	Language	9	94	92	82
	Math	9	99	98	90
	Both	9	94	90	79

*Figures not included in the 1984-85 Commissioner's Report Card

Testing Information

Students in Tennessee are given three different tests.

Students in grades 3, 6 and 8 are given the **Basic Skills First Achievement Test**. This test measures how well students have mastered essential reading and mathematics skills taught at or prior to these grades. These scores show the average percent of skills mastered by nonhandicapped students in your school system.

Students in grades 2, 5 and 7 take the **Stanford Achievement Test**. Students in grades 9 and 12 take the Stanford Test of Academic **Skills (TASK 2)**. These tests tell how groups of students perform when compared to students at the same grade nationwide. These scores are reported as stanines. Stanines are scores from one to nine, where one is low and nine is high. An average score is four, five, or six. These scores show the average stanine on each part of the test for the nonhandicapped students in your school system.

The **Tennessee Proficiency Test** measures the minimum skills in mathematics and language arts that students should possess upon graduation from high school. Students must achieve a passing score of 70 percent correct on both the math and language arts tests in order to fulfill one of the requirements for receiving a regular diploma. Students take the test for the first time as ninth graders and are given up to five opportunities to pass both parts of the test. These figures show the percent of ninth grade nonhandicapped students passing the test.

Other Information:

% of Students in Attendance: This figure shows the average percent of students in attendance daily in your school system for the 1985-86 year.

% Enrollment Change: This figure shows the percent change in a group of students who started in the ninth grade four years ago and should have completed twelfth grade this year. It is a four year average. Decreases happen when students drop out of school, move away, graduate early, fail a year, or leave school for other reasons not listed. If this figure is preceeded by a + more students moved into this graduating class than left it.

Pupil-Teacher ratio: This figure shows the average number of students per teacher in your school system averaged over all grades. The count includes only classroom teachers, including special education teachers (who may teach extremely small classes), art, music and physical education teachers. Administrators, such as the principal or assistant principal, are not included in this count. Librarians and guidance counselors are not included in this count.

Percent of Oversized Classes: This figure shows the percent of classes in all grade levels which had waivers for being over the maximum class size. Maximum class sizes in Tennessee are: 25 for grades K-3; 28 for grade 4; 30 for grades 5-6; 35 for grades 7-12; 23 for vocational.

Percent Students on Free or Reduced Lunches: Students whose family income meets certain criteria are eligible for free or reduced price lunches. This figure shows the percent of students in your school system who receive free or reduced price lunches.

Expenditures per Pupil: This figure shows the average number of dollars spent for each pupil in average daily attendance for your school system.

% of Students Suspended: This figure shows the percent of students suspended in out-of-school suspension in your school system for the 1985-86 year.

% of Students Expelled: This figure shows the percent of all students in your school system expelled from school during the 1985-86 year.

% Elementary/Secondary Schools Accredited by SACS: Schools may elect to seek accreditation from Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) in addition to receiving state approval. This agency recognizes quality schools, maintains a list of accredited schools and requires a continuing school improvement program.

Eligible Professionals on Career Ladder: This figure shows the percent of professional staff in your school system who are participating in the Career Ladder Program. The number includes regular classroom teachers, guidance counselors, librarians and administrators.

Average Professional Salary: This figure shows the *estimated* average salary for all certificated personnel in your school system.

Diplomas Granted: These figures show the percent of the twelfth grade class receiving different types of diplomas. Some school systems offer their own diplomas based on requirements which may exceed these standards. Tennessee students may receive four kinds of diplomas:

Honors Diploma: Schools systems may offer an optional diploma to students who meet increased requirements established by the State Board of Education. The requirements include accelerated English, math, science and social studies, and a 3.0 grade point average.

High School Diploma: Awarded to students who (a) earn 18 units of credit, (b) make passing scores on all components of the Proficiency Test and (c) have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct.

Certificate of Attendance: Awarded to students who have earned 18 units of credit and who have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, but who fail to meet Proficiency Test standards.

Special Education Diploma: Awarded to students who have satisfactorily completed an Individualized Education Program and who have satisfactory records of attendance and conduct, but who have not passed all components of the Proficiency Test.

Students Not Receiving Diploma in Spring Graduation: This figure represents students who will receive their diplomas after completing summer school or who failed to complete high school.

Percent of Students in Vocational Education Courses: This figure shows the percent of the school system's average daily membership enrolled in one or more vocational education courses. Students enrolled in more than one vocational course are counted only once.

Percent of Students in Special Education (excluding gifted): This figure shows the percent of students in your school system who are receiving special education services. Gifted students are not included in this figure.

Percent of Chapter 1 Students: Chapter 1 is a federally funded program to assist students in eligible schools who need remediation in the areas of reading or mathematics. This figure shows the percent of students, receiving services under Chapter 1.

Percent of Students With English as a Second Language: This figure shows the percent of students for whom English is not a native language who are receiving special instruction in English as a second language.

System Information		Grade Level	1984-85	1985-86	State Average
Number of Schools		K-12	3	3	10
Average Daily Membership		K-12	1,304	1,249	5,774
% Student Attendance		K-12	95.9	94.9	94.3
% Enrollment Change		9-12	-17.6	-26.4	-25.2
Pupil/Teacher Ratio		K-12	17.2	16.8	19.7
% Oversized Classes		K-12	*		3.7
% of Students on Free or Reduced Price Lunch		K-12	*	32.0	45.0
Expenditures per Pupil		K-12	$2,985.27	$3,149.07	$2,293.23
% of Students Suspended		K-12	**	1.36	4.64
% of Students Expelled		K-12	**	0.08	0.06
% Elementary Schools Accredited by SACS		K-8	**		22.0
% Secondary Schools Accredited by SACS		7-12	**		64.0
Professional Educator Information					
% Eligible Professionals on Career Ladder		K-12	91.0	95.0	91.0
Average Professional Salary		K-12	*	$29,401.64	$21,978.16
Student Information					
% Diplomas Granted	Regular	12	91.3	94.4	87.4
	Honors	12	1.7		2.2
	Special Education	12	1.7		2.2
	Certificate of Attendance	12			1.5
	Seniors not Receiving Diploma in Spring Graduation	12	*	5.6	6.7
% Students in Vocational Education Courses		7-12	*	87.2	54.8
% Students in Special Education (Excluding Gifted)		K-12	*	13.6	11.5
% Chapter 1 Students		K-12	*	28.8	15.2
% Students with English as a Second Language		K-12	*	0.0	0.2

*Figures not included in the 1984-85 Commissioner's Report Card

**Figures compiled differently in 1984-85

Information About
Alcoa City Schools

In 1986 Governor Lamar Alexander honored Alcoa Elementary School as one of the "Ten Most Outstanding Schools" in the state of Tennessee. The $10,000 award and crystal trophy were well deserved recognition for the strong instructional program that has evolved over the last fifteen years since three elementary schools were consolidated into the one open space facility.

The Alcoa School System has always maintained a progressive commitment to academic excellence and high expectations of its students, teachers and administrators. Alcoa's outstanding instructional programs were clearly verified when Alcoa attained top rankings in state-wide comparisons of 1985 tests results even though its student population is made up of a "normal" distribution (including both extremes) of socio-economic and intelligence levels. With some minor deviations Alcoa students at the selected grades scored the same in 1986 as their 1985 counterparts in the Basic Skills and Proficiency Tests while outscoring them significantly on the Stanford Achievment Tests.

Because its three schools have so frequently taken the initiative in instituting new programs over the years, Alcoa's staff members have continuously been called upon to do inservice activities for other school systems. The Alcoa administrators and teachers have been involved in leadership roles in developing, writing, editing, piloting, implementing and evaluating curriculum and programs that Tennessee has mandated state-wide. Over ninety percent of Alcoa's teachers and administrators have chosen to enter the state's Career Ladder. Thirty-three percent of Alcoa's eligible administrators and twenty percent of its eligible teachers have been evaluated and awarded the upper levels of certification in the state's program.

(This information was written by the local school system.)

The Better Schools Program: An Update

Tennessee students continue to benefit from one of the most comprehensive and unique education reform packages in this country: the Better Schools Program. During the past three years, Tennessee educators have proved that they can rise to the challenge of change in all areas of education. They have provided numerous new opportunities for learning and enrichment to students.

Basic Skills First mathematics and reading programs have been implemented in grades K-8 in every school system. The original Basic Skills First programs were revised to reduce the paperwork required of teachers and to strengthen the program.

The Computer Skills Next program has been implemented for all seventh and eighth graders in the state. Computer Literacy guides will be available for grades five through eight this fall. Each school with seventh or eighth grade classes is equipped with a complete computer lab.

Elementary school students are also reaping the benefits of the Better Schools Program. Consulting art and music teachers have reached almost 90 percent of the state's local school systems with ideas and training to upgrade these programs in the elementary schools. Approximately 93 percent of eligible children in Tennessee now attend kindergarten classes.

During the past two summers, the Governor's Schools of Tennessee have allowed over 1,000 gifted and talented high school juniors and seniors to receive intensive instruction on university campuses. This year, the four-week long residential programs included the Schools for the Arts, the Sciences, the Humanities, and International Studies.

Educators are being rewarded for their efforts. This summer, certification decisions raised the number of educators on Tennessee's Career Ladder to 40,418, including 4,084 at the higher Career Levels II and III. At this time, 91 percent of all eligible persons have joined the Career Ladder. The program offers recognition and incentive pay to outstanding educators. It also provides additional learning opportunities to students through extended contracts.

Is the Better Schools Program making a difference? Teachers and administrators say it is. Current student achievement records show improvement over previous years' records. This year, students scored as high or—in most cases—higher on every area of the Basic Skills First test than they did last year. Second graders who took the Stanford Achievement Test this year scored above the national average in all subject areas, and the averages for fifth and seventh graders who took the test showed significant improvements over the 1985 results. Three percent more ninth graders passed the Tennessee Proficiency Test in 1986 than in 1985.

The Better Schools Program: It's dynamic and it's effective. It has turned the nation's attention to Tennessee as a leader in education reform. It works!

TENNESSEE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
School Checkup, Part A

School Year _____-_____

Name of School_____

Grade Levels_____Checkup Date_____

School System_____

Please complete this form using the most recent information available to you. Specific instructions for computing data are found in the Instructions for completing your School Checkup.

Information about the student body and teachers.

1. Total Enrollment (Oct. 31) _____

2. Special Education Students
   % gifted _____
   % other resource _____
   % CDC students _____

3. % Chapter I students _____

4. % Free and reduced lunches _____

5. % Student transfers during the school year _____

6. % Students suspended or expelled (out of school suspension) _____

7. % Dropouts. _____

8. % Student attendance. _____

9. % Teacher attendance. _____

10. % Teachers certified in all areas which they teach. _____

11. % Teachers with planning periods _____

12. Pupil-teacher ratio (regular classroom teachers only). _____

13. % Oversized classes. _____

14. Average class size _____

For items 15 - 18, please circle yes, no, or n/a (not applicable)

15. Every student is issued learning materials for every class:
    a. academic yes no n/a
    b. vocational yes no n/a

16. Specialists are provided in art, yes no n/a
    music, yes no n/a
    P.E., yes no n/a
    library yes no n/a
    guidance yes no n/a
    other yes no n/a

17. The school is accredited by Southern Association. yes no n/a

18. There is a published school discipline policy. yes no n/a

19. Teachers across the school system use the same curriculum yes no n/a

Test score information. Please use the most recent scores available to you.

		Grade Level	Schl. Avg.	System Avg.	State Avg.
20.	Stanford Achievement Test Scores (SAT) Reading	2			
		5			
		7			
	Math	2			
		5			
		7			
	Spelling Language	2			
		5			
		7			
	Environment Science	2			
		5			
		7			

		Grade Level	Schl. Avg.	System Avg.	State Avg.
	Social Science	5			
		7			
21. Stanford Test of Academic Skills (TASK)	Reading	9			
		12			
	Math	9			
		12			
	Language	9			
		12			
	Science	9			
		12			
	Social Science	9			
		12			
22. Basic Skills First Scores (BSF)	Reading	3			
		6			
		8			
	Math	3			
		6			
		8			
23. % Students Passing State Proficiency Test	Language	9			
	Math	9			
	Both	9			
24. % Diplomas:	honors	12			
	regular	12			
	certificates	12			
	Special ed	12			

Additional information. Please complete as necessary.

25. Major accomplishments of this school, its students, or its teachers:

26. Other important facts about this school:

TENNESSEE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROJECT
School Checkup, Part B

TEACHER FORM

School Year_____-_____

Name of school_____

Directions: This is a survey of what you think about the activities at your school. Please read each statement carefully, and decide how true it is about your school. Then mark the form by circling the response which fits best:

A. Strongly agree with this statement
B. Agree with this statement
C. Neutral feelings about this statement
D. Disagree with this statement
E. Strongly disagree with this statement

If you do not know whather the statement is true or false, leave the response blank.

I. Instructional Focus

There is a well-defined focus on instruction and academics in the school.

		SA	A	N	D	SD
1.	Current school goals and objectives are communicated to appropriate people.	A	B	C	D	E
2.	Current goals and objectives are implemented in this school.	A	B	C	D	E
3.	Teacher instructional time is protected.	A	B	C	D	E
4.	There are close working relationships with feeder schools (schools to which we feed students and schools from which we receive students).	A	B	C	D	E

5. Specialized programs are present to meet student needs (such as special ed., bilingual, gifted, out-of-school experiences). A B C D E

6. Students participate in co-curricular activities (science club, band, vocational youth clubs). A B C D E

7. Students participate in extra-curricular activities (athletics, Y-teens, Key Club). A B C D E

II. Instructional leadership

A strong instructional leader is present in the school.

8. There are well-defined and communicated school goals and mission statements. A B C D E

9. These goals are established by (mark all which apply):

Principal A B C D E

Parents A B C D E

Teachers A B C D E

Other Staff A B C D E

10. These groups have opportunities for input in instructional decisions:

Teachers A B C D E

Students A B C D E

Parents A B C D E

11. The instructional leader is visible and accessible to

a) community (civic organizations, athletic events) A B C D E

b) staff (department meetings, classroom visits, extra-curricular activities) A B C D E

c) students (athletics, classroom visits). A B C D E

12. Principal conducts classroom observations. A B C D E

13. Evaluations are conducted and feedback is provided to personnel. A B C D E

III. School Climate

There is a safe and orderly school climate.

14. The school building is clean, safe, and well-maintained. A B C D E

15. The building is adequate for its population and programs. A B C D E

16. Provisions are made for students with physical, health, and/or medical needs. A B C D E

17. There is a positive reward system for students (beyond good grades). A B C D E

18. Good teaching is recognized and rewarded. A B C D E

19. Rules are consistently enforced. A B C D E

20. Disciplinary records are maintained. A B C D E

21. In general, people in this school care about each other. A B C D E

IV. High Expectations

All people in the school believe that students have the ability learn the material and that all teachers have the ability to teach the students. Teacher behaviors convey high expectations of achievement for all children.

22. Teachers recognize and reward achievement and abilities for all students. A B C D E

23. School staff communicates high expectations to students. A B C D E

24. Special ed students spend the majority of their time with regular students and are included in school activities. A B C D E

25. Opportunities for professional growth are provided for all staff. A B C D E

V. Home-School Relationships

The effective school promotes strong positive relationships between the school and the student's home and community.

26. Organized parent group meetings are held. A B C D E

27. Parent volunteers are welcome. A B C D E

28. Community awareness activities are held. A B C D E

29. Advisory committees are used. A B C D E

30. Community resources are used in instruction. A B C D E

31. There is systematic and timely communication with parents (newsletter, calendars, school information sheet). A B C D E

32. Student progress reports are communicated to parents on a systematic basis (grade record sheet, progress report, etc.) A B C D E

VI. Student Performance

Standardized measures of pupil achievement are used as the basis for evaluation of school programs.

33. Test scores are communicated to parents. A B C D E

34. Tests scores are used to

a) Diagnose student problems, A B C D E

b) Place students, A B C D E

c) Improve instructional programs A B C D E

35. Students are frequently assessed through a variety of methods (teacher made tests, observation, student work). A B C D E